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KONA LOW ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING CONFIRMS PRECAUTIONS ARE NEEDED AS RECOVERY CONTINUES

026-034

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 2, 2026

HONOLULU — Precautionary environmental monitoring confirmed expected pathogens in flood-carried mud, sediment, and nearshore waters impacted by the Kona Low Storms. These results also confirm that recommended precautions greatly reduce possible risk.

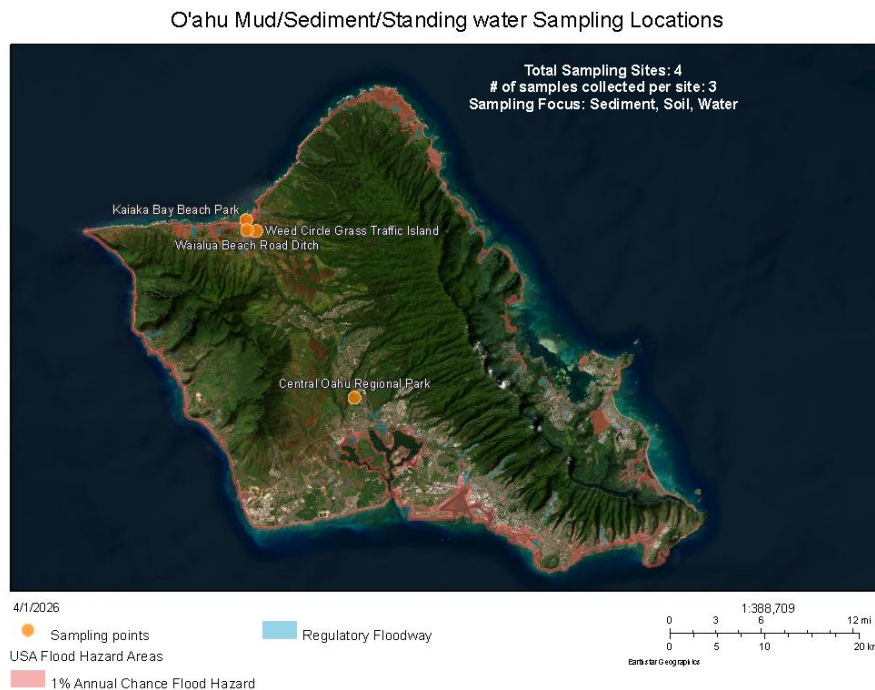
Floodwater, and Flood-Carried Mud and Sediment

Initial samples of floodwater and flood-carried mud and sediment were collected from three sites where mud from impacted communities is being consolidated and one floodwater drainage site. Samples were tested for *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*), *Salmonella*, *Enterococcus*, Hepatitis A, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Campylobacter*, *Clostridium perfringens*, *Clostridium tetani*, and *Leptospira*. These analytes are commonly found in floodwaters and the mud they leave behind due to stormwater runoff and possible wastewater contamination. Some can persist naturally in soil and water, while others are introduced through human and animal waste.

Preliminary results from the consolidated mud and sediment samples detected the presence of *E. coli*, *Enterococcus*, and *Salmonella* bacteria in select samples. Based on information on the Kona Low flooding, land use on the North Shore, as well as other flood events around the

country, DOH fully expected to find these wastewater indicators in flood-carried mud. Hepatitis A was not detected in preliminary samples.

Sampling results for *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Campylobacter*, *Clostridium perfringens*, *Clostridium tetani*, and *Leptospira* are pending. DOH will share additional sampling results with the public when they are available, but also would expect to find these indicators in floodwater or flood-carried mud and sediment.



“These findings confirm what we expect after major flooding and they also show that with simple precautions, people can safely continue cleanup and recovery efforts,” said Governor Josh Green. “Our priority is protecting the health of our communities. We want residents to know that by wearing protective gear, washing up after exposure and staying informed, they can significantly reduce their risk. We will continue to share timely updates and guidance as we support our communities through recovery.”

Testing mud and sediment for these indicators is not routinely conducted, as levels vary widely depending on environmental conditions and location. As such, there are no established baseline levels for comparison.

Based on the test results, previously provided guidance remains appropriate and effective. With proper precautions, the presence of these pathogens in the floodwater and flood-carried mud and sediment, is unlikely to cause increased illness in people working or living in these areas.

Taking recommended precautions to prevent bacteria entry through the skin or mouth, like wearing PPE, cleaning exposed skin and washing hands after handling mud, soil, or standing water, greatly reduces health risks from these pathogens and other contaminants expected after a flood.

Promptly removing mud and cleaning and drying homes and other impacted areas after a flood are among the most important things individuals can do to remove contamination and prevent other hazards like mold from developing. Clean areas and belongings with soap and water. Dry out belongings and mud outside in the sun. Direct sunlight helps reduce microbial survival on exposed surfaces. Porous materials that cannot be fully cleaned and dried may need to be discarded.

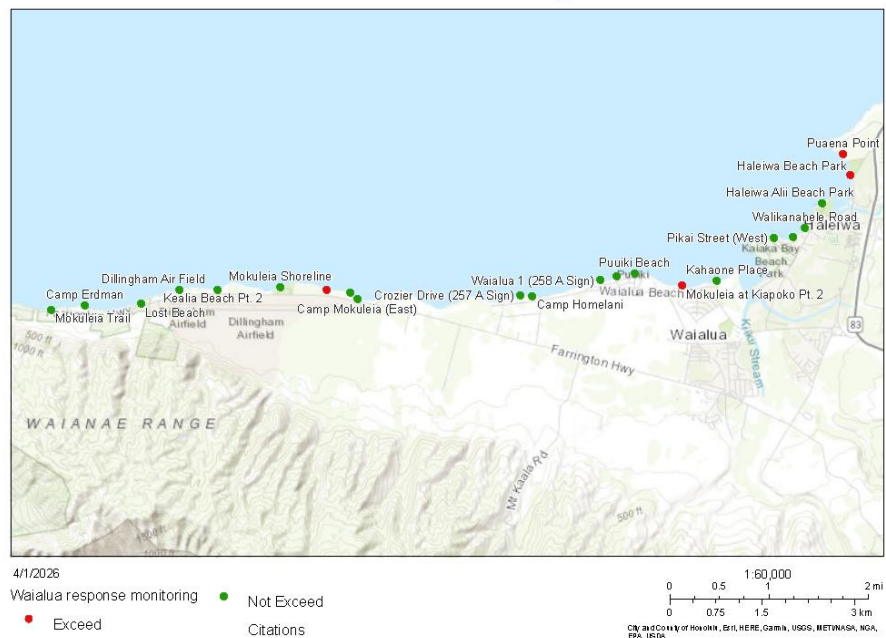
Individuals who were exposed to floodwater or flood-carried mud and sediment, who develop signs of a skin infection (redness, pain, swelling, fever), a gastrointestinal infection (persistent diarrhea (especially if bloody) or vomiting, abdominal pain, fever) or breathing problems after cleanup, should promptly seek care from a medical provider. Individuals working in impacted areas should also ensure that tetanus vaccinations are up to date.

Delays in cleaning floodwater and mud from indoor areas can increase the risk of mold and other hazards. Safe cleanup guidelines, including recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) and use of disinfectants, are available at <https://health.hawaii.gov/konalowstorm/>.

Nearshore Water Quality Monitoring

DOH collected samples from 22 beach sites on the North Shore of O‘ahu, supplementing its regular testing of 80 beach sites per week. Samples were tested for bacterial indicators, known as *Enterococci*, which may signal an increased risk of gastrointestinal illness for swimmers. Results at four of the 22 monitoring stations exceeded DOH’s beach action value: Pua‘ena Point, Hale‘iwa Beach Park, Mokulē‘ia at Kiapoko Pt. 2, and Kawaihāpai 1. DOH has posted advisory signs at each of these locations.

CWB Waialua monitoring



Testing represents a point in time, and DOH continues to advise beach users to stay out of waters that appear brown or murky, especially following storms or heavy rain.

Brown water advisories remain in place for communities on Maui and O‘ahu, and Kaua‘i.

Updates on water quality advisories are available at <https://eha-cloud.doh.hawaii.gov/cwb/#!/landing>.

Environmental monitoring results are available at <https://health.hawaii.gov/konalowstorm/>. DOH will continue to post data on environmental monitoring throughout the Kona Low recovery.

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